

A photograph of a woman with long brown hair, wearing a black t-shirt, riding a bicycle on a paved path. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. In the background, other people are walking on the path, and a metal railing of a bridge is visible on the right side. The scene is outdoors with greenery in the distance.

# Sustrans' asks for the 2021 Bristol mayoral elections

## Sustrans' manifesto asks

The Covid-19 pandemic is a wake-up call that has both exposed and widened the vast inequity that exists between people and places. At the same time the climate crisis has not gone away. It's imperative that we take urgent action now to create jobs, meet net-zero commitments and improve health.

Towns, cities and regions will be at the heart of building back better. Healthier, fairer places and better transport will underpin the UK's recovery. We must act now. The upcoming mayoral election in Bristol has never been so important.

### **Ask 1: Commit to increasing funding and delivery of ambitious walking and cycling schemes**

This should include making temporary schemes permanent, prioritising local walking and cycling infrastructure plans, and ensuring residents and businesses are engaged and consulted. The National Cycle Network should also be improved for everyday journeys in urban areas and to better connect people to nature and green space.

**73% of Bristol residents support increasing space for walking and cycling on high streets and 66% support restricting through traffic on residential streets.**

Across the UK, cycling and walking could create 103,000 jobs in the next two years, many of which are good for immediate job creation, requiring non-graduate workers.<sup>1</sup>

**We support the planned development of a Liveable Neighbourhoods Strategy for the city. But Bristol needs to develop a multi-year investment plan for active travel to deliver transformative change.**

**The next Mayor needs to commit to delivering a programme of co-designed liveable neighbourhoods as well as the primary networks set out in the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan.**

## **Ask 2: Make 20-minute neighbourhoods a central principle in local planning, transport, health and economic policy**

This will lead to walkable neighbourhoods with more services and amenities within a 20-minute return walk of where people live. Attractive cycling and public transport networks will enable people to reach other areas. 20-minute neighbourhoods support local development, high streets, jobs and the local economy while reducing transport poverty and isolation.

Many of us have been living more locally since lockdown and have benefited from access to green space, shops and other services on our doorsteps. But too often people have been isolated. Everyone should be able to reach essential services, green space and connect with others, no matter their demographic background.

**65% of UK adults agree that people should be able to meet most of their everyday needs within a 20-minute walk from their home.<sup>2</sup>**

Yet evidence suggests most new settlements and urban extensions are located and designed in ways that exacerbate car dependency.<sup>3</sup>

**In developing the Local Plan, the Council must maximise the use of brownfield sites whilst ensuring the space between buildings prioritises people on foot, bike and public transport.**

**The Urban Living SPD should be updated to include a strengthened requirement for developers to complete a walkability assessment – with schemes refused planning in cases where key services such as schools, doctors surgeries and food shops are more than a 10 minute walk away.**

## **Ask 3: Ensure policy and investment in walking, cycling and public transport prioritises people who are disadvantaged or marginalised**

Design walking and cycling plans to address, and be evaluated against, how they reduce inequity. Prioritise infrastructure improvements in more isolated neighbourhoods, especially those which suffer from deprivation. Back this up with programmes and support for disadvantaged and marginalised groups to make walking and cycling inclusive.

**The Marmot Review published in February 2020 reported that inequalities have grown in the last 10 years across the UK.<sup>4</sup>**

Covid-19 has exacerbated inequity further and disadvantaged and marginalised groups have been disproportionately affected in terms of health, education and employment.<sup>5,6</sup>

Walking and cycling can help reduce social inequity by increasing access to jobs, education and services, whilst improving health and social inclusion.

**In Bristol, 18% of residents from socio-economic groups D and E feel that cycling is not for people like them. This group of apprentices, manual labourers and the long-term unemployed are also the least likely to own a vehicle, and are trapped into**

expensive forms of transport. Cycling offers these groups a quick, cheap means of getting to work and to access skills and employment opportunities, but often the infrastructure isn't there to support them to feel safe.

The next Mayor of Bristol must prioritise delivering walking and cycling improvements to the most deprived parts of the city to reduce health, wellbeing and economic inequalities.

#### **Ask 4: Take immediate action to make local transport zero-carbon, improve air quality and create low-carbon jobs**

This must include steps to reduce car use as well as electrifying vehicles.<sup>7</sup> We must also continue existing commitments to reduce air pollution, including introducing Clean Air Zones and take more action to tackle particulate matter. This must be done fairly and alongside improvements to make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive than driving.

The opportunities to create low-carbon jobs and industries across all sectors have never been greater. National and local government action is required to ensure the UK is leading the way on reducing GHG emissions as we host COP26 in Glasgow.

Investing in a green economic recovery could create **1.6 million** new jobs in Britain as the Covid-19 crisis subsides, including **230,000** jobs in public transport, walking and cycling.<sup>8</sup>

Air pollution already costs thousands of lives across the UK, and recent evidence shows air pollution is linked to more Covid-19 deaths.<sup>9</sup> Preventative action must be taken.

**Road-based transport accounts for one third of all carbon emissions in Bristol. The One City Climate Strategy sets out the need for unprecedented behaviour change to meet our 2030 net zero carbon target. Research by the University of Bristol Cabot Institute suggests that we need to cut driving and increase levels of walking and cycling to 55% of all journeys. This is the equivalent of losing over 550 million car miles from the city each year by 2030.**

We support the planned mass transit project. However, the first line will not be complete until 2032 at the earliest. Walking and cycling infrastructure is significantly quicker and cheaper to deliver, and will begin to pay back carbon reductions sooner.

## References

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